

## How to Get Your Child Involved in Training Rover



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Adding a furry, four-legged friend into the family mix can be a joyful time, but it can be stressful. Obedience training, new feeding schedules, and a few sleepless nights may be in store for you, but you can eliminate a lot of unwanted frustration if you include your children in the process. In fact, dogs that don't learn to obey your children may develop bad habits that will be hard to break in the long run.

There are many benefits to establishing a functional relationship between a child and man's best friend. Teaching your children about the historical descendants of natural instincts of your new pet will help them understand its behavior and promote co-existence. It will also demonstrate the importance of establishing who is the boss of whom early on in the relationship. Making an effort to consciously [include your children](#) in raising your new puppy will help them learn respect, boundaries, proper communication skills, and a sense of responsibility. [Below](#) are some ways to get your children involved in the process:

### Commands

Your children don't have to be involved with all of the training, but teaching them the basic commands will show the dog who is in the authoritative position, and it will show your children how to communicate clearly with your dog. You can help your children teach your dog simple orders like "sit," "down," and "come" using

different incentives like dog treats or with their favorite toy. For instance, when teaching the dog to sit, have the child hold a treat right above the dog's nose, then move it back slowly over the dog's head. The dog will naturally want to follow the treat, and the head movement will persuade them into a sitting position. Upon sitting, the dog should immediately get the treat, then your child should follow up with more positive reinforcement, saying "good dog!" or giving the dog a scratch behind the ears.

## **Daily Tasks**

Just like anybody in your family, your new dog has needs that need to be met, sometimes multiple times a day, like eating and going outside for potty training. To involve your children in the feeding process, have one of them first command the dog to sit and stay, then put the food in the dog's bowl. Once they've finished, they should then tell the dog to go to their bowl. During this process, it's a good time to reinforce good behavior in your children's treatment towards the dog. Teach your children not to take the dog's food, tease the dog, and to be kind toward the dog even if it is misbehaving. If you are the example your children are following, it will hold you accountable to follow these rules as well.

## **Exercise**

Incorporating your new pet into physical activity is a win for everybody. There are plenty of ways to let your dog burn off some energy, including going for a walk, playing fetch, or going for a swim. If you choose any of these activities, here are some things to consider:

- Walk in a park or side streets that don't have much traffic. Enlist the help of a professional [dog walker](#) to help teach your kids how to safely walk your dog.
- Depending on the ages of your children, you may only be able to walk short distances in the beginning
- Teach your children proper guidelines, like keeping the dog close to their side and don't yank or pull on the leash
- Keep your dog away from other dogs—Your dog might enjoy the company of other dogs, but other dogs might not
- Avoid retractable leashes that can bind up and injure your children's fingers
- When playing fetch, emphasize the command for the dog to drop the ball. Have a second ball to reinforce the command, and tell the dog to sit before throwing it

Having a dog is something your family members can enjoy for years to come. Defining and developing strong, healthy relationships between your children and your new pet will strengthen their bond and their love.